

VZCZCXR09673
OO RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHAD #0263 0591145
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 281145Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0484
RHMFIUU/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1252
RHVBAKS/COMUSNAVCENT

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 000263

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA; INR/NESA; INR/B;
RRU-NEA
IIP/G/NEA-SA
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR SREBNY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OIIP KMDR TC

SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: UAE, FRANCE AND THE U.S.; ARABS
AND IRAN

11. SUMMARY:

A UAE columnist in "Al-Ittihad" criticizes Arabs for a selective use of terminology in differentiating between martyrdom and terrorism and insinuates that Iran is meddling in Lebanon.

A UAE intellectual in "Al-Khaleej" suggests that France's recent military agreements and exercises with the UAE symbolize a prudent search for an alternative to permanent reliance on the U.S. alone to assure the security of the Gulf. While granting that Iran cannot be trusted, he also suggests that the UAE must be prepared for both American "follies" (military strikes against Iran) as well as the possibility that the U.S. will strike a deal with Iran and sell out smaller Gulf States. End Summary.

12. Under the headline "New players: UAE and France", UAE professor Dr. AbdulKhaleq Abdullah wrote 02/26 op-ed in Sharjah-based daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"The cooperation between Abu Dhabi and Paris was given more attention than it merited. [...] These logistical arrangements do not impair the sovereignty of the UAE nor do they affect its neutral position, and, above all, they are not directed against any particular country in the region."

"Relying solely on Washington to assure Gulf security is uncomfortable. The UAE message is clear: it does not want to count wholly and permanently on America's protection; it wishes to diversify its sources of protection to avoid getting involved in any potential American military adventures in the region. If the United States is planning a military strike against Iran, the UAE must move away from these American follies. If Washington were to strike a bargain with Iran, it would be important for the UAE to search for alternatives. Our strong ties with Washington are not reassuring and our confidence in the United States is misplaced. It is wise for a small State like the UAE to think outside of the context of a close security link with the United States."

"[Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid's] visit [to Teheran] was important, yet it is difficult to believe Iran's promises or to predict what Teheran may do. No matter how strong the level of understanding reached between the UAE and Iran, strategic and security challenges

posed by Iran can never be underestimated or dismissed. To have a strategic deal with Iran requires first developing our self-defensive capabilities."

"Having close ties with France or with any other country is not the solution. What is certain is that the second largest economy in the Arab region (the UAE) has gained more security and safety through strategic cooperation with France. As for France, the fifth largest economy in the world, it has confirmed that it has vital interests in the Arabian Gulf, and it has an agenda different from the American agenda. This step is modest but has huge and clear strategic objectives. The messages here are addressed to all."

¶3. Under the headline "Emad Magneyah and the conflict of martyrdom versus terrorism," UAE columnist, Mohammed Al-Hammadi, wrote 02/27 in Abu Dhabi-based Arabic semi-official daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"Some Arabs insist on a selective use of terminology [when discussing] martyrdom and terrorism. Whoever kills others and dies is a heroic martyr; whoever comes to their nations and kills their children on their territory is a terrorist and a criminal! Sectarianism was not as strong [in Lebanon] prior to Hezbollah's hyper-strength. It seems that certain players are nourishing this and there is no doubt that Iran is playing an organized role in this issue."

QUINN